

## Commissioner's Weekly Wrap Up

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DCS Communications Office

**March 19, 2004**

### **This Week In Central Office**

#### Monday, March 15

Commissioner Miller and many regional administrators were present for the Joint Government Operations Sub-Committee Sunset Hearing.

#### Tuesday, March 16

Commissioner Miller gave brief budget presentation to the House Finance, Ways & Means committee. Thank you to Paul VanderMeer and his staff for all of their hard work!

#### Wednesday, March 17

Commissioner Miller traveled to the Upper Cumberland Region!

### **The Week Ahead**

#### Wednesday, March 24

Commissioner Miller will travel to the Hamilton and South East regions!

Staff Contact: [Carla.aaron@state.tn.us](mailto:Carla.aaron@state.tn.us)

#### Friday, March 26

Commissioner Miller will be a featured speaker at the "Celebrate Women" luncheon in Murray, KY.

### **Team Excellence Challenge Update!**

*Phase I* is winding down and the newly appointed executive directors, with the assistance from the deputy commissioners, will soon begin assembling their teams. This will begin *Phase II* and specific information will be shared on these opportunities within the next month.



Please see pages 3 - 6 to learn more about our new *Team Excellence* executive directors.

Once again, thanks for your enthusiasm and openness to change within our agency!

## Communications Update!

- ✓ Thank you for emailing us your favorite motivational and leadership quotes! Please continue sending them to: [Sarah.beth.davis@state.tn.us](mailto:Sarah.beth.davis@state.tn.us). Please be sure to type "Motivational Quote" in the subject line. Thanks!

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The best and most **beautiful things** in the world cannot be seen or even touched  
- they **must be felt with the heart**.

~Helen Keller

The great thing in this world is not so much where we are, but in what direction  
we are **moving**.

~Oliver Wendell Holmes

The **ultimate measure** of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort  
and convenience, but where he stands at times of **challenge and controversy**.

~Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

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## ***Team Excellence Executive Directors***

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### **Deputy Commissioner for Protection and Prevention: *Bonnie Hommrich***

*Bonnie Hommrich* joined DCS in January 2003, as an Executive Administrative Assistant to Commissioner Miller. Bonnie has over 35 years experience in the arena of child welfare, serving in numerous capacities such as front line case manager, supervisor, training specialist, assistant manager, district manager, deputy commissioner and as the Principal Assistant to the Secretary for the Cabinet for Families and Children in Kentucky. Most recently, Bonnie has been leading the Brian A. Implementation Team in the development of the Path to Excellence. As Deputy Commissioner, Bonnie will supervise the Office of Child Safety, Child Permanency, Family and Child Well-Being, Regional Support and Juvenile Justice. Bonnie earned her MSSW from Kent School of Social Work, University of Louisville.

"A recent quote I read puts into words my hopes and dreams for what I believe can guide us in our work:

*Care more than others think wise.*

*Dream more than others think practical.*

*Expect more than others think possible!*

I'm so proud to be working with DCS staff and living these hopes and dreams everyday!"

### **Executive Director of Regional Services: *Judy Cole***

*Judy Cole* has served as the Regional Administrator for the Northeast region since 1997. Prior to that, Judy was the Superintendent at Mountain View Youth Development Center and was the Director of Lift Academy, Johnson City Group Home and Elizabethtown Group Home. Judy has experience as a secondary education teacher and was a probation counselor. Judy earned a Master's degree in Education and Educational Psychology.

"I believe that our work is all about relationships. Relationships are important on all levels including children, families, employees, providers, judges, and court staff. Often good relationships help work out the most difficult of problems."

### **Executive Director of Permanency: *Elizabeth Black***

*Elizabeth Black* has been the Kinship Care Coordinator and Family-to-Family Co-Coordinator in Central Office since July 2000. Elizabeth is also a member of the Path to Excellence Team. Prior to working for DCS, Elizabeth was a kinship care case manager collaboratively working with a community partnership. In this position, she managed grants, authored policies and advocated for children and families before the legislature. Elizabeth was involved in the Early Intervention Truancy Program through the Davidson County Juvenile Court and was a special

education teacher in Louisiana. Elizabeth earned her MSSW at the University of Tennessee College of Social Work.

"I believe, in fact, that the practice of public child welfare can be improved by the creative work of a few diverse individuals with a common vision needed education and experience, and strong conviction."

**Executive Director of Juvenile Justice: *Ken Steverson***

*Ken Steverson* was the Assistant Commissioner for the Information Management division. Ken began his career as a correctional counselor in 1971 and held positions as District Director and Regional Director in the South Central Region. He was later appointed as the Director of Juvenile Probation for the Department of Youth Development. In 1996, Ken was instrumental in the creation of the Department of Children's Services and served as a Director 3 for regional services. He was appointed to Assistant Commissioner in 2002. Ken earned his Master of Arts in Psychology from Middle Tennessee State University.

"I very much want to experience the day when our DCS staff can look citizens of this state in the eye and say that they are proud to work for this organization and that they are proud of the difference they make in the lives of children and families."

**Executive Director of Safety: *Beth Kasch***

*Beth Kasch* has served as the Regional Administrator for the Mid-Cumberland Region since 1998. Prior to that position, Beth was a team coordinator in Mid-Cumberland, a program specialist in adoptions in Central Office, and a social counselor and field supervisor in the foster care and child protective services programs in Hamilton County. Beth earned a Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice from the University of Tennessee Chattanooga.

"I am most interested in preserving families by preventing custodial episodes and strengthening families."

**Executive Director of Program Support: *Ken Sanders***

*Ken Sanders* comes to DCS from the Nashville Metropolitan Police Department where he was the Executive Administrator to the Chief over the fiscal division. Ken served in that position since 1989 and worked in a similar capacity with the Metropolitan Health Department from 1972-1988. Ken possesses an MBA from the University of Knoxville.

**Executive Director of Human Resources Development: *Thomas Riche (Tom)***

*Thomas Riche (Tom)* most recently held the position as the Director of Community Literacy Programs with Nashville READ. He was previously employed by the U.S. Census Bureau and served in the U.S. Air Force for 28 years. During Tom's tenure with the USAF, he directed educational and training programs for drug and alcohol abuse and EEO programs, and prepared the Air Force Affirmative Action Plan. Tom also served as an administrative and

personnel officer and a squadron commander. Tom earned an MA in Human Resource Management from Pepperdine University and also an MBA from Webster University.

"My life as well as my work ethic evolves around the following quotes:

'What we must decide is perhaps how we are valuable rather than how valuable we are.' Edgar Z. Friedenberg

It is an absolute fact that, 'People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care.' Always remember, people are our number one priority."

#### **Executive Director of Performance Enhancement: *Paul VanderMeer***

*Paul VanderMeer* has been the budget director for DCS since 1997. Prior to this position he was a children's plan coordinator and a budget analyst with the Department of Finance and Administration. He worked for the Tennessee Children's Services Commission as the research director and an information specialist. Paul has experience as a teacher and counselor for children with behavior disorders and learning disabilities. Paul earned his Master's of Science in Child Development from George Peabody College.

"I am particularly interested in combining program and outcome data within the context of our budget to determine how successfully we are using our resources to accomplish desired results."

#### **Inspector General: *Debra Valentine***

*Debra Valentine* has been the Director of Youth Development Centers since 1998. Prior to this position, Debra was a correctional program director and program manager in DCS and with the Department of Youth Development. She worked as a classification coordinator and correctional counselor at Spencer Youth Center (presently known as Woodland Hills Youth Development Center) and as a correctional counselor and tutor at Taft Youth Center. Debra earned an MA in Educational Psychology and Guidance and Counseling from Tennessee Technological University and is a 2000 graduate of the Tennessee Government Institute.

"The skills I practice i.e., to respect others and their opinions, to listen as well as to be heard, to be objective and fair, to have vision while maintaining focus, to instruct as I learn, to attend to detail while posturing flexibility, as well as to guide as needed while I encourage others to grow, are the skills I will display and expect to see displayed by others in senior leadership."

**Blue Ribbon Team Members:** *This team will focus on ways to get DCS out from under agency lawsuits and will work on special projects.*

**Randal Lea** was the Assistant Commissioner for resources and community development. He has over 15 years experience managing public and private social services agencies and working with adolescents and families. Randal was the past President of the Tennessee Association for Child Caring Agencies. He earned a Master's degree in counseling from Trevecca Nazarene University.

**Mary Beth Franklyn** has been the Director of Quality Assurance since 2001. Prior to this position she was the Executive Assistant to the Commissioner and coordinated departmental matters involving TennCare issues. Mary Beth is an attorney and has experience as an assistant attorney general and assistant general counsel for the Department of Health. Mary Beth earned her Doctor of Jurisprudence in 1990 from the Nashville School of Law.

**Brenda Bell** serves as a program director, overseeing the compliance with juvenile justice lawsuits. Prior to this position, Brenda was an ASA 4 at Tennessee Preparatory School and has experience in training, policy writing, and was a grants program manager for the Department of Labor for 7 years. Brenda earned her BA in psychology and sociology from Austin Peay State University.